Mr. LUGAR. The ranking member and I have plans to hold hearings on the continued proliferation challenges in Russia. Clearly the threat posed by tactical nuclear weapons would be an important topic to be discussed and investigated in that forum. I believe that tactical nuclear warhead reductions should be a top United States priority in our new relationship with Russia.

Mr. CONRAD. Would the chairman and ranking member consider sharing their views on the threats posed by the proliferation of tactical nuclear weapons with the administration? Might I propose a letter indicating our shared concerns and our hopes that this issue will be a high priority for the administration in future discussions with Russia?

Mr. LUGAR. I thank the Senator for his thoughts. This issue was raised repeatedly during our hearings on the Treaty. I am confident of the administration's efforts to engage Russia on this issue. I would be happy to reinforce the committee's views on these issues with the appropriate Administration officials.

Mr. BIDEN. Let me echo the comments on the chairman. After entry into force of the Moscow Treaty, getting a handle on Russian tactical nuclear weapons must be a top arms control and non-proliferation objective of the United States Government. I look forward to joining the chairman in holding hearings on this matter and in writing to the administration with the Senators from Indiana and North Dakota. A comprehensive approach to this problem, as the senior Senator from North Dakota suggests, is sorely needed.

Mr. CONRAD. I thank my colleagues for their concern about this clear and present ''loose nuke'' threat and for their supportive statements today. We cannot afford for this blind spot in our non-proliferation efforts to go uncorrected. With the assurances of the chairman and ranking member, I withdraw my amendment and yield the floor.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, the treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions also known as the ''Moscow Treaty'' obligates each side to reduce the number of its strategic offensive nuclear warheads to a range of 1,700 to 2,200 by the end of 2012. This treaty is a good beginning and I congratulate the President for making a complete break with past arms control approaches by placing reliance on deterrence and missile defense. The enemies of American must clearly understand that they cannot attack or threaten us with impunity and that our Nation will have a national missile defense in place as soon as possible.

President Reagan coined the phrase ''trust but verify,'' This phrase could have no greater meaning than when it is applied to the Moscow Treaty.

I recently returned from Moscow where I was deeply impressed by the dramatic transformation underway in that huge country. While there is no doubt that Russia is on the track towards democracy and a free market economy, it is equally clear to me that the Russians are not at the stage where they can be given a blank check to implement the Moscow Treaty. Congress has authorized more then $4.7 billion for U.S. programs aimed at helping Russia and other newly independent states to reduce the threats from their weapons of mass production. The Moscow Treaty does not expressly deal with the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program but the objectives of the treaty cannot be achieved without extending this assistance to Russia. The only certainty about future costs to implement this treaty is that the costs are uncertain and that the uncertainty goes toward how much higher costs will be. According to a GAO report issued this week, ''. . . a pilot facility to destroy 14 percent of Russia's chemical weapons over an 11-year period would cost the United States almost $890 million—an increase of about $150 million from the estimate . . .'' Higher program cost uncertainty is compounded by Russia's apparent inability to pay for its agreed-upon share of project costs.

Another problem with an effective reduction of weapons of mass destruction is that Russia is not always willing to provide access to its sensitive national security sites. Access is essential to verify that the Parties are living up to their part of the agreement. According to the same GAO report, U.S. inspectors do not have access to the sites in Russia where 90 percent of the materials used in weapons of mass destruction are stored. Access issues largely revolve around trust, and, frankly, this treaty highlights the need for access; it does not solve the problem.

Despite its obvious incompleteness and inadequacies, the Moscow Treaty is a step in the right direction of reducing and limiting strategic nuclear warheads. Reliance on a START I verification regime as provided in the treaty is not, of course, satisfactory, but it can provide a block in the foundation for good faith implementation through a genuine verification scheme.

President Bush is headed in the right direction in working to build a constructive partnership with Russia. American does not fight wars with democracies. While a reduction in nuclear weapons is an important element on both sides in building the trust and mutual dependence needed for a stable, long-term relationship, I want to stress the importance of maintaining the Nuclear Triad. Our land-base missile systems, in particular, play an essential role in ensuring this Nation's security. With 200 Minuteman III missiles, Malmstrom Air Force Base, in my State of Montana has and will continue to play a critical role in our national security.

The Moscow Treaty deserves the advice and consent of the Senate so long as it is seen as the beginning and not the end of the long path we must follow to rid the earth of weapons of mass destruction and threats to our national security.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, it is one of those ironies of history that the U.S. Senate began debate on the ratification of the latest and historic arms control treaty on the day that historians mark as the 50th anniversary of death of Stalin. Whether, in fact, Stalin died on this day, or whether he had been poisoned a few days before, is a fact that, like so many others of Soviet history, is clouded with uncertainty. But it is a fact that he was one of the most brutal dictators of the 20th century and he died at a time when the Soviet Union was a global foe of the United States.

More interesting for this debate, Stalin's death in 1953 occurred at a time when our nations were just beginning a strategic competition that would see our nuclear stockpile grow to massive and frightening levels before we reached our first accommodations, nearly 20 years after Stalin's death.

Today, while we still have many cultural and political differences with the Russian state, we cooperate on more issues than we compete, and we do not compete under the threat of nuclear annihilation.

A decade ago, the Soviet Union went to the dustbin of history, and with it went an ideological enmity that locked us in a spiral of growing nuclear arsenals and the existential comfort of mutually assured destruction, a comfort that made sense to the strategic thinker, but left of lot of other people all over the world, including in our own societies, feeling quite insecure.

After President Nixon initiated an era of arms control agreements with the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty, or SALT, the pendulum began to swing the other way. And, as is often the case with historic pendulums, it far exceeded a sensible point. By the early 1980s, while strategic arms treaties had already reduced the aggregate megatonnage of our combined strategic arsenals, a school of arms control theology had been accepted that, as is often the case with the social science theology of the moment, threatened to overcome all rationale thinking on strategic issues. The answer to all arms control issues was always yet another treaty. Existing treaties were sacrosanct, with the wise old dictum so famously and wisely uttered by Bismarck in the 19th century ignored: ''At the bottom of all treaties is written in invisible ink, rebus sic stantibus''—Until circumstances change.

Circumstances did change. Technologies barely imaginable in the 1960s, when the first strategic treaties were contemplated, became commonplace in the 1980s. An era of self-enforced vulnerability to mutually assured destruction, enshrined in the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, became anachronistic as physicists and engineers first